

# **MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD**

## **Media Release**

**HQ-MND Baghdad**

**Camp Liberty**

**Baghdad, Iraq**

**APO AE 09344**

**Commercial: (914) 822-8174**

**IRAQNA 011-964-790-192-4675**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RELEASE No. 20060503-05**

**May 3, 2006**

---

# **Soldiers help mend girl's heart**

By Cpl. Michael Molinaro  
2nd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FOB KALSU, Iraq — With the help of Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, a 9-year-old Iraqi girl, sick with a serious heart condition, is on her way to receiving a medical procedure her parents only dreamed about.

Zenab Maan Fares, from the city of Hillah, has a condition known as Tetralogy of Fallot, which is basically a hole between the ventricles of the heart. Soldiers from 2nd BCT have been instrumental in helping coordinate for the surgery, which will be quite extensive, and the post-surgery care.

It all started when Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT, conducted a reconnaissance of the children's hospital in Hillah to assess the state of the hospital and find out what supplies were needed to keep the facility functioning properly.

A friendly Iraqi man and his young daughter, Zenab, who had a bluish tint to her face and looked very sick, approached Sgt. 1st Class Sean Brack, a platoon sergeant in

Troop A, 1-10 Cav. The man explained the condition of his daughter and the difficulties he faced trying to find the proper care for her. Brack listened intently. Upon his return to Forward Operating Base Charlie, he approached Capt. Jon Bodenhamer, commander, Troop A, 1-10 Cav., about what had occurred.

Bodenhamer immediately began the process of getting the Fares family the help they needed. He proceeded to call a longtime friend of his family, retired Lt. Col. Thomas Parr. Parr, an orthopedic surgeon in Houston and West Point classmate of Bodenhamer's father. Bodenhamer said he was optimistic that Parr would have connections in the medical field that could possibly help.

In the meantime, Capt. Chris McNeil, surgeon, 1-10 Cav., began checking frequently on Zenab, assessing her condition. McNeil performed an ultrasound scan on Zenab and made a more precise diagnosis compared to the one she received in Hillah.

"Capt. McNeil has been instrumental in the process," said Bodenhamer. "His medical knowledge allowed him to make a much better diagnosis."

Parr and his wife, Joannie, set out to make things happen. The first thing on the list was finding a surgeon to perform the procedure and a hospital to deal with the issue. They convinced Texas Children's hospital in Houston to take the case.

"Once again, Capt. McNeil's efforts allowed Texas Children's hospital to make a good enough assessment of the girl's condition and make a decision regarding the case," Bodenhamer said.

1st Lt. Tim Trimbur, medical platoon leader, Troop A, 1-10 Cav., and Capt. Robert Johnson, physician assistant, 1-10 Cav., have also been vital parts of the process, said Bodenhamer. They keep in contact with Zenab and her parents, coordinated a lot of the

medical treatments to prepare for the trip to Houston, and have been the link between the Iraqi assistance center and 1-10 Cav.

This is the second deployment to Iraq for Bodenhamer. He said he feels that winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people may do more in the long run for this country than just combating terrorism, he said.

“Even though we are Soldiers, we are also citizens of the world. Something like this makes what we are doing here more meaningful,” he said.

The West Point Society of Greater Houston, made up of graduates from the academy, including father and son Bodenhamer and Parr, has taken the lead on organizing everything for the family when they arrive in the U.S., Bodenhamer said. Members donated enough funding to purchase commercial airline tickets to Houston from Kuwait for Zenab and her father. They also set aside spending money for the family for their stay in Houston.

The family is expected to be in Houston up to four months, depending on how Zenab progresses after the surgery. Mrs. Parr arranged for an Iraqi-American support group, available for the Fares’ at all times, and translators.

It’s a huge thing for the Apache troop and the squadron, Bodenhamer said. Doing good for someone in the area we work in is rewarding; showing them that we do more than kick down doors is important.

“It’s something that will change Zenab’s life and make us feel good for the rest of our lives.”